National Agricultural Statistics Service, *Pennsylvania Field Office*
2301 North Cameron Street, Room G-19
Harrisburg, PA 17110-9405
Marc Tosiano, Director
717-787-3904
Fax: 717-782-4011
nass-pa@nass.usda.gov
www.nass.usda.gov
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KEYSTONE

Ag Digest

Note to Survey Respondents: Results of many surveys we conduct throughout the year are included in this report! Most survey results are **not** published individually. **Thank you** for taking the time to complete our surveys!

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HIRED WORKERS DOWN 4 PERCENT, WAGE RATES UP 3 PERCENT FROM A YEAR AGO

There were 1,129,000 hired workers on the Nation's farms and ranches during the week of October 9-15, 2005, down 4 percent from a year ago. Of these hired workers, 840,000 workers were hired directly by farm operators. Agricultural service employees on farms and ranches made up the remaining 289,000 workers.

Farm operators paid their hired workers an average wage of $9.61 per hour during the October 2005 reference week, up 29 cents from a year earlier. Field workers received an average of $8.90 per hour, up 28 cents from last October, while livestock workers earned $9.14 per hour compared with $8.91 a year earlier. The field and livestock worker combined wage rate, at $8.96 per hour, was up 27 cents from last year. The number of hours worked averaged 42.0 hours for hired workers during the survey week, up 4 percent from a year ago.

The largest decreases in the number of hired farm workers from last year occurred in California, Florida, and in the Appalachian II (Kentucky, Tennessee, and West Virginia), Northern Plains (Kansas, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota), and Northeast I (New England and New York) regions. In California, tightened security at the Mexican border and increased competition from the higher paying construction industry caused farm worker shortages. Fruit and vegetable growers had to leave some acreage unharvested due to the shortage. Thus, fewer workers were hired during the reference week. Declining tobacco acreage in the Appalachian II region continues to greatly decrease the demand for hired workers. In Florida, tropical storms throughout much of the growing season caused significant damage to vegetable and citrus crops and delayed harvest, lessening the need for hired workers. In the Northern Plains and Northeast I regions, rain before and during the reference week delayed field crop harvest and reduced the demand for hired workers.

The largest increases in the number of hired farm workers from a year ago were in the Southern Plains (Oklahoma and Texas), Pacific (Oregon and Washington), Corn Belt II (Iowa and Missouri), Southeast (Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina), and Northeast II (Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania) regions. In the Southern Plains region, despite rain in south Texas, the reference week was mainly warm and dry, in sharp contrast to the widespread rain before and during last year's reference week. Therefore, more hired workers were needed. Apple harvest in the Pacific region was virtually complete prior to last year's reference week but was still in full swing during the reference week this year. More workers were required to handle the continuation of the harvest. In the Corn Belt II and Southeast regions, the weather was virtually ideal compared to last year's rain and muddy conditions, increasing the demand for hired workers. Continued strong demand from the nursery and greenhouse industries in the Northeast II region kept hired worker levels above last year, despite heavy rains across the region.

Hired farm worker wage rates were generally above a year ago in most regions. The largest increases occurred in the Corn Belt II, California, Appalachian II, Lake (Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin), and Mountain III (Arizona and New Mexico) regions. The higher wages in the Corn Belt II region were due to the accelerated corn and soybean harvests which required highly skilled workers for combining and hauling. In California and in the Appalachian II region, wages were up due to a lower percentage of part time workers. Sugarbeet harvest in the Lake region progressed rapidly, necessitating more highly paid machine operators. Wages in the Mountain III region were higher because of more salaried workers putting in fewer hours, which pushed their hourly wage higher.

The 2005 U.S. all hired worker annual average wage rate was $9.51, up 3 percent from the 2004 annual average wage rate of $9.23. The U.S. field worker annual average wage rate was $8.70, up 25 cents from last year's annual average. The field and livestock worker combined annual average wage rate at the U.S. level was $8.84, up 3 percent from last year's annual average wage rate of $8.56.

FARM EMPLOYMENT, HOURS WORKED & WAGE RATES, WEEK OF OCTOBER 9-15, 2005 [1]

Item	NE II [2]	U. S. [3]
	Thousands	
Farm Employment		
Hired Workers	39	840
Expected to be Employed		
150 Days or More	32	620
149 Days or Less	7	220
	Hours	
Hours Worked		
Hired	39.6	42.0
	Dollars per Hour	
Wage Rates for		
All Hired Workers	10.00	9.61
Type of Worker		
Field & Livestock Combined	9.09	8.96
Field	9.21	8.90
Livestock	8.62	9.14

[1] Excludes Agricultural Service Workers. [2] NORTHEAST II includes Pennsylvania, Maryland, New Jersey and Delaware. [3] Excludes AK.

PRICES RECEIVED BY FARMERS, SELECTED COMMODITIES, NOVEMBER 2005

Commodity	Unit	Pennsylvania			United States		
		Nov 2004	Oct 2005	Nov 2005 [1]	Nov 2004	Oct 2005	Nov 2005 [1]
		Dollars					
Corn	Bu.	2.26	2.12	2.10	2.05	1.82	1.79
Wheat, Winter [2]	Bu.	-	-	-	3.39	3.33	3.25
Oats	Bu.	1.67	2.61	2.27	1.51	1.59	1.46
Barley [2]	Bu.	-	-	-	2.45	2.41	2.49
Soybeans [2]	Bu.	-	-	-	5.36	5.67	5.68
Hay, Dry All	Ton	132.00	132.00	135.00	88.70	97.70	91.70
Dry Alfalfa	Ton	145.00	154.00	160.00	95.20	106.00	97.50
Dry Other	Ton	117.00	124.00	128.00	73.50	76.50	76.30
Apples, Fresh Use	Lb.	.250	.250	.230	.245	.286	.282
Potatoes	Cwt.	7.20	[6]	[6]	5.02	5.54	6.09
Cows, Slaughter	Cwt.	47.30	45.90	44.60	48.70	46.60	45.80
Steers & Heifers	Cwt.	78.70	83.00	85.70	90.20	96.60	97.40
Calves	Cwt.	110.00	118.00	118.00	123.00	134.00	132.00
Barrows & Gilts	Cwt.	51.80	45.10	42.00	56.10	47.30	45.00
Sows	Cwt.	43.30	39.40	36.70	45.20	41.70	37.70
Eggs [3]	Doz.	.460	.330	.460	.437	.314	.482
Milk, Fluid Grade	Cwt.	17.70	17.30	-	16.20	15.50	15.10
Manufactured Grade	Cwt.	16.30	14.70	-	15.90	14.90	14.20
All	Cwt.	17.70	17.30	17.00	16.20	15.50	15.10
Milk Cows [4]	Head	-	1,800.00	-	-	1,870.00	-

[1] Preliminary. [2] Pennsylvania price not published on monthly basis, average price is published annually. [3] Market (table) eggs, including eggs sold retail by the producer. [4] Quarterly (Jan., Apr., July, Oct.). [5] Price not published to avoid disclosure of individual firms. [6] Monthly price for potatoes discontinued in 2005.

NOVEMBER FARM PRICES RECEIVED INDEX INCREASED 2 POINTS FROM LAST MONTH

The preliminary All Farm Products Index of Prices Received by Farmers in November, at 113, based on 1990-92=100, increased 2 points (1.8 percent) from October. The Crop Index is up 1 point (1.0 percent) while the Livestock Index decreased 1 point (0.8 percent). Producers received higher commodity prices for eggs, oranges, potatoes, cucumbers, and cattle. Lower prices were received for lettuce, dairy, hogs, broilers, and tomatoes. The overall index is also affected by the seasonal change based on a 3-year average mix of commodities producers sell. Increased average marketings of dairy, cattle, cotton, and oranges offset decreased marketings of soybeans, potatoes, peanuts, and sweet corn.

Preliminary All Farm Products Index is down 2 points (1.7 percent) from November 2004. The Food Commodities Index, at 119, increased 3 points (2.6 percent) from last month but decreased 3 points (2.5 percent) from November 2004.

ALL CROPS: The November index is 104, up 1.0 percent from October but 7.1 percent below November 2004. From October, index increases for potato & dry beans and oil bearing commodities more than offset the index decreases for vegetables, feed grains & hay, and food grains.

Food Grains: The November index, at 111, is 0.9 percent below the previous month and 2.6 percent below a year ago. The November all wheat price, at $3.36 per bushel, is down 7 cents from October and down 10 cents from November 2004.

Feed Grains & Hay: The November index is 84, down 2.3 percent from last month and 9.7 percent below a year ago. The corn price, at $1.79 per bushel, is down 3 cents from last month and 26 cents below November 2004. The all hay price, at $91.70 per ton, is $6.00 below October but up $3.00 from last November.

Dairy Products: The November index, at 116, is down 2.5 percent from a month ago and 6.5 percent lower than November last year. The November all milk price, at $15.10, is down 40 cents from last month and down $1.10 from November 2004. The fluid grade milk price is down 40 cents and the manufactured grade milk price is down 70 cents from the previous month.

U.S. PARITY PRICES FOR FARM PRODUCTS [1]

Commodity	Unit	Nov 2004	Oct 2005	Nov 2005
		Dollars		
Wheat	Bu.	10.10	10.60	10.60
Corn	Bu.	6.77	7.08	7.10
All Milk, Sold to Plants [2]	Cwt.	35.20	37.50	37.60
Wool	Lb.	1.57	1.73	1.74
Barley	Bu.	6.71	7.17	7.20
Oats	Bu.	3.94	4.21	4.22
Potatoes	Cwt.	15.20	15.90	16.00
Rye	Bu.	6.30	6.76	6.78
Soybeans	Bu.	15.90	17.10	17.20
Apples, For Fresh Use [3]	Lb.	.528	.556	.557
Beef Cattle	Cwt.	170.00	184.00	184.00
Calves	Cwt.	228.00	249.00	250.00
Hogs	Cwt.	105.00	114.00	114.00
Lambs	Cwt.	202.00	223.00	223.00
Sheep	Cwt.	83.90	89.80	90.10
Eggs	Doz.	1.69	1.79	1.79
Turkeys, Live	Lb.	1.020	1.080	1.080

[1] Parity prices are computed under the provisions of Title III, Subtitle a, Section 301 (a) of the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1938 as amended by the Agricultural Acts of 1948, 1949, and 1956. [2] Seasonally adjusted price as percentage of parity price. [3] Equivalent packinghouse-door returns for CA, NY (apples only). Price at point of first sale for other states.

COLD STORAGE HIGHLIGHTS
SEPTEMBER 30, 2005

Apples in cold storage reported by cold storage warehouses for Pennsylvania totaled 6,177,000 bushels on October 31, 2005, compared to 6,667,000 bushels on October 31, 2004. The three varieties with the largest fresh market and processing reported stocks in bushels were: York with 1,920,000 bushels stored; Golden Delicious with 1,618,000 bushels stored; and Rome, 1,013,000 bushels.

Total apple stocks in Pennsylvania totaled 259,434,000 pounds on October 31, 2005, compared to 280,000,000 pounds on October 31, 2004. Pear stocks in cold storage were 7,000 pounds, down from 926,000 pounds stored on October 31, 2004.

Nationally, frozen food stocks in refrigerated warehouses on October 31, 2005 were greater than year earlier levels for frozen fruit and pork.

Butter stocks were down 19 percent from last month, and down 6 percent from a year ago.

Total red meat supplies in freezers were up 1 percent from last month and up 2 percent from last year. Frozen pork supplies were up 3 percent from last month and up 5 percent from the previous year. Stocks of pork bellies were up 10 percent from last month, but down 3 percent from last year.

Total frozen poultry supplies on October 31, 2005 were down 1 percent from the previous month and down 4 percent from a year ago. Total stocks of chicken were up 5 percent from the previous month, but down 1 percent from last year. Total pounds of turkey in freezers were down 11 percent from last month and down 10 percent from October 31, 2004.

STOCKS IN COLD STORAGE, UNITED STATES

Commodity	Oct 31, 2004	Sep 30, 2005	Oct 31, 2005
		(000) Lbs.	
Butter	107,152	124,061	100,528
Cheese, Total Natural	756,118	765,357	737,100
Eggs, Frozen	17,877	18,837	17,574
Poultry, Total Frozen	1,273,460	1,235,135	1,219,192
Chicken	800,294	754,882	791,484
Turkeys	472,343	477,801	423,457
Fruits, Frozen	1,210,339	996,641	1,229,636
Fruit Juices, Frozen	1,812,971	1,478,471	1,393,901
Vegetables, Total Frozen	2,573,006	2,356,460	2,512,049
Potatoes, Total Frozen	1,274,867	1,180,358	1,204,596
Meats, Total Frozen	889,229	890,932	903,356
Beef, Total Frozen	452,589	438,750	439,309
Pork, Total Frozen	423,058	431,573	443,858

PENNSYLVANIA APPLES IN COLD STORAGE, October 2005

Variety	October 31, 2004					October 31, 2005				
	Fresh Market [1]		Processing			Fresh Market [1]		Processing		
	Reg.	C.A.	Reg.	C.A.	Total	Reg.	C.A.	Reg.	C.A.	Total
					(1,000) Bushels					
York	10	0	1,044	600	1,654	18	7	1,460	435	1,920
Stayman	71	0	96	0	167	35	2	42	0	79
Rome	100	51	798	324	1,273	45	50	548	370	1,013
Red Delicious	316	300	135	60	811	350	310	86	68	814
Golden Delicious	148	131	609	483	1,371	190	220	720	488	1,618
Gala	50	43	5	2	100	60	90	9	0	159
McIntosh	43	0	22	11	76	38	0	3	10	51
Fuji	175	6	50	0	231	60	8	15	0	83
Other [2]	250	101	525	108	984	120	90	190	40	440
Total	**1,163**	**632**	**3,284**	**1,588**	**6,667**	**916**	**777**	**3,073**	**1.411**	**6,177**

[1] Includes total quantities on hand; graded and ungraded, packed or loose on the last day of the month specified. [2] Includes miscellaneous varieties and some quantities of above varieties not identified. n/p (not published) due to too few reports or insignificant volumes stored, these are included in the 'other' variety category.

APPLE & PEAR STOCKS IN COLD STORAGE, PENNSYLVANIA & UNITED STATES, October 31, 2005

Commodity	All Warehouse Stocks		
	October 31, 2004	September 30, 2005	October 31, 2005
PENNSYLVANIA			
APPLES:			
Regular Storage	186,800,000	124,320,000	167,538,000
Controlled Atmosphere	93,200,000	36,204,000	91,896,000
Total Apples	280,000,000	160,524,000	259,434,000
PEARS:			
Bartletts	37,000	56,000	1,000
Other Varieties	889,000	840,000	6,000
Total Pears	926,000	896,000	7,000
UNITED STATES			
APPLES:			
Regular Storage	1,595,369,000	1,009,941,000	1,563,343,000
Controlled Atmosphere	4,695,285,000	1,968,279,000	4,258,308,000
Total Apples	6,290,654,000	2,978,220,000	5,821,651,000
PEARS:			
Bartletts	53,753,000	109,403,000	56,456,000
Other Varieties	421,380,000	330,978,000	427,004,000
Total Pears	475,133,000	440,381,000	483,460,000

MONTHLY POULTRY SUMMARY

Item	Unit	Pennsylvania			United States		
		Oct 2004	Sep 2005	Oct 2005	Oct 2004	Sep 2005	Oct 2005
Layers	Thous.	23,835	23,523	23,758	345,056	342,328	344,043
Eggs Per 100 Layers	Number	2,333	2,240	2,319	2,220	2,155	2,239
Eggs Produced	Million	556	527	551	7,659	7,377	7,703
Chick Hatch-Egg Type	Thous.	5,183	4,768	4,343	34,866	33,788	35,367
Chick Hatch-Broiler Type	Thous.	12,877	14,439	14,644	756,895	769,771	776,333
Poults Placed	Thous.	-	-	-	20,806	22,747	21,416

EGG PRODUCTION

Egg production in Pennsylvania during October 2005 totaled 551 million eggs, down 1 percent from the 556 million produced in October 2004. The total number of layers averaged 23.8 million during October, down less than half of a percentage point from last year. Production per 100 layers was 2,319 eggs during the month, a decrease of 14 eggs from October 2004.

Egg-type chicks hatched during October 2005 totaled 4.34 million, down 16 percent from the 5.18 million hatched the previous October. Broiler-type chicks hatched totaled 14.6 million during October 2005, up 14 percent from the 12.9 million hatched during the same month last year.

United States' egg production totaled 7.70 billion during October 2005, up 1 percent from last year's total. The total number of layers during October averaged 344 million, down slightly from the average number of layers during the same month last year. October egg production per 100 layers was 2,239 eggs, up 19 eggs from the same month last year.

Egg-type chicks hatched in the United States during October totaled 35.4 million, up 1 percent from October 2004. Broiler-type hatch totaled 776 million, up 3 percent from last year at this time. There were 21.4 million turkey poults placed in the United States during October 2005, up 3 percent from the placements during the same month a year ago.

COMMERCIAL LIVESTOCK SLAUGHTER, OCT 2005

Specie	Unit	Pennsylvania	United States
Red Meat Prod	Mil. Lbs.	100.7	3,925
Cattle	Thous. Hd.	74.2	2,678
	Mil. Lbs. Live	91.0	3,428
Calves	Thous. Hd.	11.1	56
	Mil. Lbs. Live	4.7	21
Hogs	Thous. Hd.	243.6	9,117
	Mil. Lbs. Live	60.3	2,450
Sheep & Lambs	Thous. Hd.	4.8	229
	Mil. Lbs. Live	.5	31

COMMERCIAL LIVESTOCK SLAUGHTER

Commercial red meat production in Pennsylvania during October 2005 totaled 100.7 million pounds, dressed weight basis, up 7 percent from October 2004. Beef production, at 91.0 million pounds live weight, was up 16 percent from October 2004. Total head slaughtered was 74,200, up 9 percent from last year. Average live weight increased 64 pounds to 1,226 pounds. Veal production was 4.7 million pounds live weight, down 13 percent from a year ago. Calf slaughter, at 11,100 head, was down 22 percent, and average live weight increased 41 pounds to 426 pounds. Pork production, at 60.3 million pounds live weight, was up 3 percent from a year earlier. Total head slaughtered was 243,600, was up 3 percent from October of 2004. Average live weight was 248 pounds, unchanged from October of last year. Lamb and mutton production was 464,000 pounds live weight, down 19 percent. The number slaughtered was 4,800, down 23 percent from October of last year. The average live weight increased 4 pounds from October 2004 to 97 pounds.

United States
Department of Agriculture
National Agricultural Statistics Service
Pennsylvania Statistical Office
2301 N Cameron St Room G-19
Harrisburg PA 17110-9405